

Fall 8-15-2012

# ENG 4901-001: History of the English Language

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## Recommended Citation

Buck, R, "ENG 4901-001: History of the English Language" (2012). *Fall 2012*. 117.  
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## ENGLISH 4901--History of the English Language

Dr. Buck, Professor

Office: Coleman Hall, Room 3040

Telephone: Office 581-5012 (please leave a message if I'm not there)

Mailbox: English Dept Office, Coleman Hall, Room 3155

Office Hours: 8:00 to 9:00 and 1:00-2:00 MWF and by appointment. My office is on a busy hallway. If my office door is closed, please knock. My students always come first--if there is another faculty member in my office, please interrupt us. Please always feel free to meet with me if you would like more individualized discussion of your work and progress.

**Course Objective**

This course is the third in a series of courses the English department offers in grammar and language theory. The objective of this course is to help students consider different approaches to the study of language change and to provide theoretical linguistic tools to describe different language forms that mark specific periods in the history of our language. Even though the focus of the course will remain on the internal history of the English language (its sounds, grammar, and vocabulary), external social and political factors will be investigated in order to help account for these internal changes, whenever possible. Why did the English language change? What particular factors (grammatical, social, political, etc.) contributed to this language change? What effect do language attitudes have on language change? What is Standard English really? Who has authority over language? When we attempt to describe the history of the language, what precisely are we in fact describing? These are a few of the questions we'll be pursuing during the semester. We will read and analyze excerpts from Old English, Middle English, Renaissance English, and Early Modern English in addition to texts in various contemporary dialects (West African pidgins, African-American English, and Chicano English, among others). Primary teaching methodology will be informal lectures and seminar-style class discussion of daily reading assignments and of assigned problems and papers.

**Textbooks** (available at TRS)

--Baugh and Cable's A History of the English Language, 5th edition, and Workbook, A Companion to Baugh and Cable's History of the English Language by Thomas Cable.

--Booth library reserve readings for research projects; see attached research assignments sheet.

PLEASE ALWAYS BRING YOUR WORKBOOKS, HANDOUTS, AND HOMEWORK TO CLASS.

**Course Evaluation**

Grade for the course will be based on an average of 2 exams, a research project, and homework problems, exercises, and writing assignments. The research project will consist of several parts in process (see the attached schedule for precise dates), and you will be asked to read your paper to the class. You will also be required to do home problem assignments which you will need to be prepared to discuss in class. (Tests will be based on these home and in-class assignments.) Sometimes I will collect your home assignments (unannounced) and grade them. All written assignments must be turned in in print, in person, in class; no electronic transmissions will be accepted. Your final grade will be based on the following weighted components:

Midterm exam            20%

Homework problems, exercises, writing assignments, and oral work   25%

Research Project (including all work in process)   25%

Final Exam            30%

Grading scale in this class is always 100-90% = A; 89-80% = B; 79-70% = C; 69-60% = D; below 60% = F.

Failure to complete any component of the course, including the final exam, will result in failure of the course.

**Research Project** (Scope: minimum 10 pages; graduate students 15 pages)

The purpose of this project is for you to work independently on a project in order to gain more in-depth knowledge on a topic that relates to one or more chapters in our textbook. Your paper must show evidence of that connection. You should choose a topic from the attached research assignment sheet. Around midterm you will be asked to submit a proposal (2 pages typed) along with your preliminary bibliography in which you more narrowly focus and specify your interests in the paper. Shortly after that I will ask you to report orally on what you learned from one particular source that is your best source so far (a summary report of the article). In the final weeks of the semester you will be asked to read your paper to the class. This should be a completed draft, worked through logically to the end in terms of your argumentation. The class will give you feedback (after your reading) on ways to potentially think about revising the draft during the last few weeks of the semester.

Your final paper will be evaluated on form as well as content. Documentation should be in MLA format following the current guidelines of *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. (You can request a copy that is kept behind the desk in the reference room of the library; we also have copies in the Writing Center.) I expect a clear introduction in your paper, an explicit thesis (very narrow in scope), and conclusion, with a body that consists of carefully selected details to support your thesis. Try to include specific linguistic phenomena (sample sentences, words, morphemes, sounds, discourse sequences) to support your points. The most important concept in all this is selected information that is organized meaningfully around an intelligent argument or analysis.

**Oral Work**

Since this is a senior/graduate level course, we will be conducting much of the class in seminar style. That means that you will be presenting oral work continually throughout the semester. You must listen carefully to your colleagues and take careful notes; they may at times be reading and researching different things. If notes presented in class are not clear to you, you should ask questions for clarity and/or read the item on Reserve. Using the library is considered an important part of academic life. If you will be unable to spend time in the library, you should not take this class.

**Attendance Policy**

See attached sheet.

**Tardiness**

Please be on time for class; habitual tardiness is disruptive and disrespectful of other class members. I will be taking roll each morning as soon as class begins. If you come in late, it is your responsibility to notify me after class so that I take your name off the absence sheet. If you fail to notify me on the day you are late, you will be recorded as absent. Please do not ask me for a letter of recommendation if you are habitually tardy or absent from class or are unprepared with home assignments.

**Late assignments**

All home assignments must be completed before class begins when they are assigned. Paper drafts are due when class begins on the designated dates. Make-up work will be permitted for excused absences only.

**Typing and Presentation**

Paper (all drafts) must be typed (double-spaced) in MLA format.

**Electronic Devices**

No electronic devices of any kind, including laptops, may be used at any time during class; they will be counted as a disruption in class and as an unethical use of information during oral work conducted in class. Anyone with an electronic device not stowed away and out of use during an exam will receive an automatic F on the exam--no questions asked, no discussion. Anyone who leaves class to use a phone may not reenter class--you must wait until class has ended to get your belongings.

**Classroom Behavior**

According to EIU policy established by the judicial affairs office concerning classroom behavior, you are expected to remain seated at all times while class is in session, unless you have an emergency because leaving and reentering class distracts other students from their learning and concentration. If you must leave class, you may not reenter until the class session is over to obtain your belongings.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible. If you require extra time on timed in-class exams, you must present a documented letter from the Disability Office.

**What to Do in Case of Emergency**

If we have an emergency in class, go promptly to inform Jean Toothman, Department Secretary (Room 3135) and Dana Ringuette, Chair (Room 3341) and call 911.

**English Department Statement Concerning Plagiarism**

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assignment and a grade of N/C for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Use or reproduction of any material or ideas off the internet without proper documentation is considered plagiarism and will be penalized as above. Respect for the work of others, in other words, encompasses all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

## ABSENCE POLICY

The university states in its attendance policy that you are expected to attend every class as scheduled because teaching/learning requires dialogue and when you are not there you do not engage in scholarship with others and you miss out on the logic presented in class (learning that cannot be adequately made up outside of class). University policy states that you are expected to participate actively in the learning process: this expectation means that it is your responsibility to read assignments, take careful notes on the reading, do homework exercises as assigned and provide those answers in class, volunteer responses in class, and ask questions about the material. Students who come to class do a lot of work, in other words, both oral and written, and so those who choose not to engage in that process merit taking the consequences.

There are consequences to not being in class.

1. 3 or 4 absences in the course will result in lowering of the final grade. With three absences, the final grade will be lowered by one-third. That means that if the final grade is a B on exams and papers, it will be lowered to a B-; if the final grade is a B-, it will be lowered to a C+. With four absences, the final grade will be lowered by one letter grade. If your average is a C in the course on exams and papers, your final grade in the course will be a D.
2. More than four absences in this course will result in failure of the course, regardless of grades received on papers or exams.
3. Because the university considers class time essential to a student's learning, students who have excessive absences (more than 4, excused or unexcused) will be advised to withdraw from the class in order to facilitate their success when they take the class over again at a later date.
4. Only students with an excused absence on the day of any scheduled exam may take an alternative exam, of different format, within the week of the scheduled exam.
5. I will expect you to find out from someone in the class what you've missed so that you'll be prepared for the next class meeting. Worksheets will only be distributed once; it is your responsibility to photocopy assignments from another student if you are absent.
6. Please do not tell me your reasons for not coming to class unless they are excusable according to university policy and please do not ask me what documentation you need. I do not grant permissions, in other words, for any absence. It is your responsibility to make your own decisions and to supply the best documentation you can.
7. According to university policy, there are reasons why you may be excused from class. They are listed below. However, they will be excused only if you follow the procedures outlined here in the syllabus.  
 --For any excused reason, you must notify me by leaving a message on my voice mail at 581-5012 (not email) before class begins on the day of your absence.  
 --When you return to class at the next class meeting, you must bring me a sheet of paper with the following information: your name, the date of your absence, the reason for your absence, and attached documentation that documents proof of why you weren't in class. Any absence without appropriate documentation will not be excused.

Definition of excused absence on back

Definition, according to university policy, of an excused absence:

1. University obligation, in which case you will need to present me with a letter at the beginning of the semester explaining the purpose and date of your upcoming absence.
2. Your medical illness or emergency, in which case you will need to notify me by leaving a message on my voice mail at 581-5012 (not email) before class begins on the day of your absence. Routine medical appointments or non-emergency medical appointments should not be scheduled during class time; the health services on campus are here so that you will not have to leave town for medical reasons. In addition, students experiencing personal problems should seek help immediately through the counseling services provided on campus so that personal problems don't interfere with the responsibility of being in class.

### **English 4901 Course Schedule**

Please understand that this schedule is only a guide; we are likely to spend more or less time on individual topics depending on the needs and interests of the class. (R) = On Reserve in Booth Library

#### **Weeks One and Two**

Introduction to the course.

Read Janson's "How Languages Disappear" (handout)

Oral Assignment: How and why do languages "die"?

Read Baugh, Chapter 1, English Present and Future

Oral Assignment: Prepare Workbook Questions, p. 9

Introduction to Phonetics of Present Day English--Read Workbook on consonants, pp. 1-4; Read Workbook on vowels, pp. 4-7 for general content only since there are a few errors in his chart. Use instead the vowel handout chart I will give you in class. On page 1, you will not need the symbol under vowels for the word hot in England. You will also need to add 2 additional diphthongs (in the words play and so) (see footnote #1); they will be on your handout. Finally, in the word above, only the first vowel is a schwa; the second should not be in bold; it is a wedge symbol.

Assignment #1: Write out phonetic transcriptions for words on p. 8. Does not need to be typed.

Oral Assignment: Look in a dictionary and study the completely different phonetic system that is used.

How is it different? Why do you suppose this is what is used in a dictionary?

How is the phonetic system we learned in class a different kind of tool?

#### **Week Three**

Read Baugh, Chapter 2, The Indo-European Family of Languages, Grimm's Law and Verner's Law

Oral Assignment: Prepare Workbook questions, pp. 10-11

Read Workbook, p. 11. Do exercise, pp. 14-15 and handout exercises.

#### **Weeks Four and Five**

Read Baugh, Chapter 3, Old English

Oral Assignment: Prepare Workbook Questions, pp. 20-21

Workbook exercises to be assigned.

#### **Week Six**

Old English Readings for analysis

### **Midterm Exam**

#### **Week Seven**

Read Baugh, Chapter 4, Foreign Influences on Old English

Oral Assignment: Prepare Workbook Questions, p. 47

Do Workbook exercise, p. 50 just as example of regular sound change

Language and Writing

Literacy and English Manuscripts

Read Graddol and Swann, *English: History, Diversity, and Change* pp. 41-71 (R)

### **PAPER PROPOSAL AND PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

#### **Week Eight**

Read Baugh, Chapter 5, The Norman Conquest and the Subjection of English, 1066-1200

Oral Assignment: Prepare Workbook Questions, pp. 53-54

Read Baugh, Chapter 6, The Reestablishment of English, 1200-1500

Oral Assignment: Prepare Workbook Questions, pp. 56-57

### **Weeks Nine and Ten**

Read Baugh, Chapter 7, Middle English

Oral Assignment: Prepare Workbook Questions, pp. 58-59

Workbook exercises to be assigned.

Middle English Readings for analysis

### **Week Eleven**

Read Baugh, Chapter 8, The Renaissance, 1500-1650 (Early Modern English)

Oral Assignment: Prepare Workbook Questions, pp. 96-97

Workbook exercises to be assigned.

### **Week Twelve**

Read Baugh, Chapter 9, The Appeal to Authority, 1650-1800 (Modern English)

Oral Assignment: Prepare Workbook Questions, pp. 121-122

Writing assignment: pp. 123-124. Do not do a chart. Take each word and explain in full sentences your findings for each of the three categories.

Read Workbook, pp. 122-127

### **Week Thirteen**

Read Baugh, Chapter 10, The Nineteenth Century and After (Late Modern English) and Workbook, p. 138

Oral Assignment: Prepare Workbook Questions, pp. 128-129

Read Baugh, Chapter 11, The English Language in America, and Workbook, pp. 153-157

Oral Assignment: Prepare Workbook Questions, pp. 142-143

Do Workbook exercises p. 129-130 (#10.2 and 10.3); #10.5 (we will divide these up); p. 135

Writing Assignments Ex. #11.3 and 11.4. Write out each sentence and explain in full sentences what you observe. #11.5 Just fill in chart.

### **Week Fourteen: Thanksgiving Break**

### **Weeks Fifteen and Sixteen**

Reading of Papers, Preparation for Final Exam

**PAPERS DUE November 26**

**Final Exam (Finals Week)**